

February 27, 2008

TO: Dana Pride

FROM: Holly Platz, Director's Review Investigator

SUBJECT: Dana Pride v. Washington School for the Deaf
Allocation Review No. ALLO-07-062

The Director's review of Washington School for the Deaf's (WSD) allocation determination of your position has been completed. The review was based on written documentation.

Background

You began seeking a reallocation of your position in January 2003. You submitted various requests but did not receive a response from WSD. Most recently, in April 2007, you completed a Position Review Request form you received from your supervisor. You completed this form and returned it to your supervisor, Richard Hauan, Assistant Superintendent, on April 30, 2007. Subsequently, by letter dated July 9, 2007, WSD denied your request for reallocation finding that your position was properly allocated to the Information Technology Specialist 1 (ITS1) classification.

On July 18, 2007, you appealed WSD's decision and asked that your position be allocated to the Information Technology Specialist 3 (ITS3) classification.

Summary of Ms. Pride's Perspective

You assert that you have been performing higher level application specialist duties for the past 11 years. You contend that during the past 7 years, the majority of your time has been spent on developing, creating, implementing and managing databases for the agency. You argue that you are the only person who develops, administers and manages databases for the agency and that you perform your duties independently without supervision or guidance. You also argue that you manage multiple off-the-shelf products in addition to more than 50 databases that you designed and developed for specific departments in WSD. In addition, you argue that you are responsible for designing, developing, testing and maintaining WSD's website.

Summary of WSD's reasoning

WSD determined that your position was properly allocated. WSD based their decision on your Position Review Request (PRR) form, your October 17, 2006 Position Description (PD) form and your supervisor's review of your position. Your supervisor disagreed with the information on your PRR and indicated that your position is an entry level position designed to provide support to staff using off-the shelf database products. In addition, your supervisor indicated that your position requires creativity and a need to work independently as well as at the direction of the Network Administrator and management.

Director's Determination

As the Director's designee, I carefully reviewed all of the documentation in the file including the duties and responsibilities described in your PRR form and the October 17, 2006 PD. Consistent with the direction provided by the Personnel Resources Board in Boekhoff v. Bellevue Community College, PRB Case No. R-ALLO-07-002 (2007), I considered all relevant classifications regardless of whether they were requested by you or considered by WSD. Therefore, in addition to the ITS1 and the ITS3 classifications, I considered the ITS2 classification. Based on my review of the documents, the available classifications, and my analysis of your assigned duties and responsibilities, I conclude that your position should be reallocated to the ITS2 classification.

Rationale for Determination

The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which that work is performed. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a particular position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a determination of the class that best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position. See Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

The position description serves the same purpose as the former classification questionnaire. Both the Personnel Appeals Board and the Personnel Resources Board have held that because a current and accurate description of a position's duties and responsibilities is documented in an approved classification questionnaire, the classification questionnaire becomes the basis for allocation of a position. An allocation determination must be based on the overall duties and responsibilities as documented in the classification questionnaire. Lawrence v. Dept of Social and Health Services, PAB No. ALLO-99-0027 (2000).

By his signature on your October 17, 2006 PD, your supervisor agreed that the duties described were an accurate reflection of the work of your position. As indicated in your PD, you function as the WSD Applications Specialist and provide support for network applications and the website. You provide full support for all aspects of student information systems, captioning, video production and web management. You report to the WSD Assistant Superintendent but you work in the technology support department in collaboration with the network administrator and network support staff. You support the daily operations of the student information system and interface of the system with the IEP.online database system. In addition, you provide "daily

support for staff and students to support the learning and business environment, researching, implementing, maintaining and supporting network database and student information infrastructure, software products and client and web applications.”

Also as indicated in your PD, in conjunction with other technology support staff, you serve as the WSD database manager and perform professional database support and web communications functions as well as captioning and other video technology support including infrastructure and software products. You are responsible for conducting needs assessments, monitoring operating environments relating to database and web based management, analyzing service needs, reviewing logs and messages, protecting the network security, and troubleshooting and correcting database malfunctions.

Both your PD and your PRR indicate that a majority of your time is spent working with databases including development activities, administration, management and support. Your PD emphasizes your position's responsibility to work in collaboration with others and as a member of the technology support team.

The Information Technology Specialist (ITS) Class Series Concept states:

Positions in this category perform professional information technology systems and/or applications support for client applications, databases, computer hardware and software products, network infrastructure equipment, or telecommunications software or hardware.

This category broadly describes positions in one or more information technology disciplines such as: Application Development And Maintenance, Application Testing, Capacity Planning, Business Analysis and/or Process Re-Engineering, Data Base Design And Maintenance, Data Communications, Disaster Recovery/Data Security, Distributed Systems/LAN/WAN/PC, Hardware Management And Support, Network Operations, Production Control, Quality Assurance, IT Project Management, Systems Software, Web Development, or Voice Communications.

Positions which perform information technology-related work to accomplish tasks but are non-technical in nature would not be included in this occupational category.

This is a broadly written category which encompasses a wide variety of positions that perform professional information technology systems and/or applications functions. Your position fits within the category concept because you perform technology-related database design and maintenance work in support of and to manage multiple databases and the website for the agency.

The definition for the ITS3 level classification states:

In support of information systems and users in an assigned area of responsibility, independently performs consulting, designing, programming, installation,

maintenance, quality assurance, troubleshooting and/or technical support for applications, hardware and software products, databases, database management systems, support products, network infrastructure equipment, or telecommunications infrastructure, software or hardware.

Uses established work procedures and innovative approaches to complete assignments and coordinate projects such as conducting needs assessments; leading projects; creating installation plans; analyzing and correcting network malfunctions; serving as system administrator; monitoring or enhancing operating environments; or supporting, maintaining and enhancing existing applications.

The majority of assignments and projects are moderate in size and impact an agency division or large workgroup or single business function; or internal or satellite operations, multiple users, or more than one group. Consults with higher-level technical staff to resolve complex problems.

While some of your duties appear to fit within the ITS3 level, the majority of your overall duties and level of responsibility do not rise to this level. You provide support for databases and use established vendor procedures for troubleshooting and performing functions such as database backups. And, you work in collaboration with the technology support team for functions related to the overall operations and support of WSD systems. While your supervisor indicates that your position requires some creativity, neither your PRR nor your PD indicates that you are required to use innovative approaches to complete your work or that you coordinate projects at the ITS3 level. The majority of your work, your level of independence and the complexity of your assignments do not fit within the scope and the level of duties and responsibilities encompassed by the ITS3 classification.

The definition for the ITS1 level states:

In support of information systems and users, performs routine analysis, programming, installation, maintenance and/or systems support. Diagnoses and resolves low-risk problems using pre-determined methods on computer or telecommunication software and/or hardware, or applications running in stand alone, client/server, web-based, and/or networked environments. Priorities are set by others and many non-routine problems are referred to a higher level or to another support group for resolution. Positions work under close supervision and work is oriented toward productivity, skill development, and development of professional judgment.

Your position performs work that is above the level of work described by the ITS1 classification. While you work collaboratively and as a member of the team, you do not work under close supervision. Rather, you independently perform professional level work for the day-to-day activities necessary to provide database support, to maintain the website and to provide other video technology support. You are responsible for troubleshooting and correcting database malfunctions. In your PRR you indicate that you follow database troubleshooting procedures and when necessary work with the vendor to resolve problems. Neither your PRR nor your PD indicates that you refer non-routine problems to others for resolution.

In your supervisor's response to your review request, he describes your position as an entry-level position. However, you indicate that you have been performing higher level duties since October 2001. Entry-level positions typically perform basic, clear-cut tasks under direct supervision. Based on the duties and responsibilities described in your PD and your supervisor's response to your review request, you are performing work above the entry-level.

In his response to your review request, your supervisor indicates that he monitors your work and assigns tasks as needed and that you perform work at his direction. This level of supervision is beyond the level of supervision typically provided at the ITS1 level.

The Department of Personnel Glossary of classification terms describes the various levels of supervision required.

The glossary provides that employees who work under close or "direct supervision," as found at the ITS1 level, function as follows:

Work is performed in accordance with specific instructions regarding assignments to be completed and sequence of work steps to be employed. Decision-making authority is limited to clearly defined work procedures, formats and priorities. Work is reviewed for accuracy, and adherence to instructions and established procedures.

While your supervisor assigns your work and provides you work direction, you perform your work independently, not under the level of specificity envisioned by "direct supervision." The level of supervision you receive is best described as "general supervision." The glossary provides that employees who work under general supervision, as found at the ITS2 level, function as follows:

Recurring assignments are carried out within established guidelines without specific instruction. Deviation from normal policies, procedures, and work methods requires supervisory approval, and supervisory guidance is provided in new or unusual situations. The employee's work is periodically reviewed to verify compliance with policies and procedures.

The definition for the ITS 2 level states:

In support of information systems and users, performs standard consulting, analyzing, programming, maintenance, installation and/or technical support.

Under general supervision, follows established work methods and procedures to complete tasks on computers and/or telecommunication software/hardware, applications, support products, projects, or databases for small scale systems or programs or pieces of larger systems or programs. Performs standard tasks such as consulting with customers to identify and analyze technology needs and problems; responding to and resolving trouble reports from users; processing equipment and service orders; coordinating installations, moves, and changes; analyzing problems for parts of applications and solving problems with some assistance; supporting and enhancing existing applications in compliance with

specifications and standards; conducting unit, system or usability testing; writing specifications and developing reports; developing and conducting application, software and/or system operation training for users; or serving as part of a problem solving team addressing more complex issues. The majority of tasks are limited in scope and impact individuals or small groups. Complex problems are referred to a higher level.

As stated above, you work under general supervision. You perform standard applications support including following established procedures, consulting with customers, analyzing database problems and resolving them with some assistance from the vendors. In addition, you support and enhance existing applications, create documentation, provide user training, and serve as part of the technology support team. Your position fits within the ITS2 classification.

In Fay v. Edmonds Community College, PAB Case No. ALLO-03-0008 (2003), the Personnel Appeals Board (PAB) analyzed the former Information Technology Systems Specialist II classification. Effective July 1, 2005, the ITS2 classification replaced the Information Technology Systems Specialist II and the Information Technology Applications Specialist II classifications. However, the substance of the classes did not change significantly. Therefore, the PAB's decision is instructive in this case. The PAB determined, in part, that employees functioning at the ITS2 level perform recurring duties and responsibilities in analyzing customer needs, installing software, resolving day-to-day problems, and providing user training. The PAB also found that positions at this level operate within guidelines to perform standard support services, have a limited scope of responsibility, limited decision making authority, and refer complex problems to higher levels. Your duties and responsibilities in regard to providing database and website support consistent within the description of ITS2 work described in Fay.

In Loughmiller v. Western Washington University, PAB Case No. ALLO-03-0016 (2003), the PAB determined, in part, that ITS2 level positions perform standard systems specialist work including responding to and resolving trouble reports from users, changing passwords, configuring standard software for individuals, and maintaining backups. Similar to Loughmiller, you perform standard database application work, troubleshoot and resolve problems, and configure database applications for individual users. In addition, the emails you provided as examples of your responsibilities show that you set passwords and maintain data backups.

Overall, the scope of your duties, the majority of your assignments, and your level of supervision, independence and responsibility are best described by the Information Technology Specialist 2 classification. Your position should be reallocated.

Appeal Rights

RCW 41.06.170 governs the right to appeal. RCW 41.06.170(4) provides, in relevant part, the following:

An employee incumbent in a position at the time of its allocation or reallocation, or the agency utilizing the position, may appeal the allocation or reallocation to . . . the Washington personnel resources board Notice of such appeal must be filed in writing within thirty days of the action from which appeal is taken.

The address for the Personnel Resources Board is 2828 Capitol Blvd., P.O. Box 40911, Olympia, Washington, 98504-0911.

If no further action is taken, the Director's determination becomes final.

Enclosure: List of Exhibits